

## **EPA Regions 9 and 10 Clean School Bus USA Frequently Asked Questions**

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18. Is replacing gasoline powered buses with new diesel powered buses eligible under this RFP?

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**Question 1:** Where do I get an RFP and where do I send the proposal?

**ANSWER:** The Clean School Bus Request for Proposals is at [www.epa.gov/region10/cleanschoolbus.html](http://www.epa.gov/region10/cleanschoolbus.html). The RFP contains information on how to submit a proposal.

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**Question 2:** Can an individual apply for the Clean School Bus Grant?

**ANSWER:** No. Only the eligible entities listed in Section III in the RFP can apply for a Clean School Bus Grant.

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**Question 3:** How do I demonstrate that an area is economically disadvantaged?

**Answer:** One way to demonstrate that an area is economically disadvantaged is to cite data from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) concerning the percent of area residents living in poverty. The Area Profile tool on this Web site can provide this statistic, as can using the Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Web site (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saie/saie.html>), which includes data for school districts.

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**Question 4:** Can a school district apply for funds to not only use biodiesel in school buses, but to actually fund the manufacturing process of biodiesel? Our school would like to incorporate a project where the fuel is manufactured by the school district.

**ANSWER:** No. This competition is intended to be for implementation of diesel emission reduction technologies, and is not intended to fund the manufacture, research or development of those emission reduction technologies (fuel, equipment, etc.).

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**Question 5:** Should rural school districts apply, or is the competition focused on urban districts?

**ANSWER:** The competition is open to all school districts located within Regions 9 and 10, and EPA encourages all types to apply. Please refer to the selection criteria in Section V of the RFP for additional information on how the proposals will be graded.

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**Question 6:** Our school district contracts with a local bus company for the transportation of our students in school buses. Would we be eligible to apply for the Clean School Bus grant and provide the grant funding to the bus company to retrofit the school buses?

**ANSWER:** Yes. EPA has funded this type of project in the past, since so many school districts do contract their bus fleet. The school district would have to be the applicant, would have to maintain the grant funds, set up the contract with the bus company, and ensure that all retrofits are properly installed and maintained on buses that would remain in the fleet for 3-5 years.

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**Question 7:** Is a college that owns school buses eligible to apply for this grant?

**ANSWER:** The college must first meet the eligible entity criteria in Section III, Part A of the Request for Proposals (RFP). If the college falls into one of the eligible entity categories, the

answer then depends on the actual project proposed. In Section III, Part C, threshold criteria #7 states that “All projects, regardless of type, must be for the direct benefit of a school district.” In addition, the project must meet all other eligibility screening requirements in Section III of the RFP. All applicants should ensure that the project they are proposing is eligible, based on these and any other requirements in the RFP.

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**Question 8:** Are diesel particulate filters required for retrofits, or, are buses allowed to install diesel oxidation catalysts as well? While DOCs are much less effective at reducing fine particulates, we find that if allowed, many will choose this option because it is cheaper.

**ANSWER:** Diesel particulate filters and/or diesel oxidation catalysts that are verified technologies can be used for a project in this RFP. Please read the RFP, Section I (C) for more information on Eligible Project Categories.

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**Question 9:** What is an example budget for the SF-424?

**ANSWER:** The proposed budget must have budget categories that reflect those on the SF-424A. An example budget is provided below that indicates what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA, and what portion will be paid by the applicant or other partners. Leveraged funds are not included in the approved budget for the project.

1. Personnel:

Indicate salaries and wages, by job title of all individuals who will be supplemented with these funds. For example:

|  | <b>EPA</b>            | <b>Applicant</b>      |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Fleet Manager @ \$600/wk x 12 weeks =          | \$7,200               | \$0                   |
| (or)   |                       |                       |
| • Fleet Manager @ \$15/hr x 40 hrs/wk x 12/wks = | \$0                   | \$7,200               |
| <b>Total =</b>                                   | <b><u>\$7,200</u></b> | <b><u>\$7,200</u></b> |

2. Fringe Benefits:

Indicate all mandated and voluntary benefits to be supplemented with these funds. For example:

|                                  | <b>EPA</b>          | <b>Applicant</b>  |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| • Health Insurance –             |                     |                   |
| 1 FTE @ \$35/month x 12/months = | \$420               | \$0               |
| • Dental –                       |                     |                   |
| 1 FTE @ \$40/mo x 12/months =    | \$480               | \$0               |
| <b>Total =</b>                   | <b><u>\$900</u></b> | <b><u>\$0</u></b> |

3. Travel:

Indicate number of individuals traveling, destination, number of trips, and reason for travel. For example:

| <b>EPA</b> | <b>Applicant</b> |
|------------|------------------|
|------------|------------------|

|   |                     |                     |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Site Visit to Regional Transportation Warehouse |                     |                     |
| Local Travel Mileage - 1000 miles x \$0.36 =      | \$0                 | \$360               |
| • Strategic Meeting with Co-applicants            |                     |                     |
| Air Fare for 1 person to Seattle, WA =            | \$250               | \$0                 |
| Per diem for 2 days @ \$40/day for 1 person =     | \$80                | \$0                 |
| Hotel for 1 night for 1 person =                  | \$75                | \$0                 |
| <b>Total =</b>                                    | <b><u>\$405</u></b> | <b><u>\$360</u></b> |

4. Equipment:

Identify items to be purchased such as air quality related instruments used in support of work plan objectives. Provide an estimated cost for each item. Make sure you can support your cost estimate. EPA policy defines equipment as items costing \$5,000 or greater. Indicate if your organization's definition differs. For example:

|   |                        |                        |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
|   | <b>EPA</b>             | <b>Applicant</b>       |
| • 15 Diesel Particulate Filters @ \$6000/each = | \$45,000               | \$45,000               |
| <b>Total =</b>                                  | <b><u>\$45,000</u></b> | <b><u>\$45,000</u></b> |

5. Supplies:

Indicate any items to be purchased that will be used in support of air project workplan objectives.

For example:

|                                    |                   |                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
|                                    | <b>EPA</b>        | <b>Applicant</b>    |
| • 50 DOC and anti-idling pamphlets |                   |                     |
| for community members @ \$2 each = | \$0               | \$100               |
| • Copying and postage costs =      | \$0               | \$100               |
| <b>Total =</b>                     | <b><u>\$0</u></b> | <b><u>\$200</u></b> |

6. Contractual:

Indicate any proposed contractual items that are reasonable and necessary to carry out the workplan objectives. Examples of contractual items include training from equipment manufacturer, installation of retrofit equipment by 3<sup>rd</sup> party, etc. For example:

|  |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | <b>EPA</b>            | <b>Applicant</b>      |
| • Fleet mechanic training on retrofitting, |                       |                       |
| anti-idling workshop                       |                       |                       |
| 50 mechanics @ \$100/each =                | \$5000                | \$0                   |
| • Installation of DOCs                     |                       |                       |
| 20 units @ \$75/each =                     | \$0                   | \$1,500               |
| <b>Total=</b>                              | <b><u>\$5,000</u></b> | <b><u>\$1,500</u></b> |

[See Section VIII, Other Information for information on Partnerships.]

7. Construction (Construction costs are not applicable to these proposals.)

8. Other:

Indicate general (miscellaneous) expenses necessary to carry out the objectives stated in the workplan. For example:

|   | <b>EPA</b>          | <b>Applicant</b>    |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Office needs (postage, phone, fax, etc.) =  | \$150               | \$150               |
| • Office space<br>(Utilized for project-related activities such<br>as installation, etc.) \$120/mo x 2/mo = | \$240               | \$0                 |
| <b>Total=</b>   | <b><u>\$390</u></b> | <b><u>\$150</u></b> |

9. Total Direct Charges:

Summary of all costs associated with each object-class category.

|                  | <b>EPA</b>             | <b>Applicant</b>       |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>* Total =</b> | <b><u>\$58,895</u></b> | <b><u>\$54,410</u></b> |

10. Total Indirect Costs:

Organization must provide documentation of a federally approved indirect cost rate (percentage) reflective of proposed project/ period. Applicant should indicate if organization is in negotiations with appropriate federal agency to obtain a new rate. The following Web site provides more information on indirect costs policy: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/omp.nsf/webpage/Region+10+Grants+Administration+Unit>.

|   | <b>EPA</b>            | <b>Applicant</b>  |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| * IDC Rate is 10% of total direct charges = | <b><u>\$5,889</u></b> | <b><u>\$0</u></b> |

11. Total Cost (Note: this must match the “Estimated Funding Total” on SF-424 and budget category subtotals in SF-424A):

Indicate overall figure of all direct and indirect costs. For example:

|                         | <b>EPA</b>             | <b>Applicant</b>       |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>* Total Budget =</b> | <b><u>\$64,784</u></b> | <b><u>\$54,410</u></b> |

**Question 10:** I am having trouble with the application process. When I try to register at Grants.gov, the Credential provider does not accept the funding number (posted in the subject line). Please tell me what steps I should take to apply for this opportunity.

**ANSWER:** If you have followed the instructions in the RFP, Attachment A, and are having trouble with the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) site, please call the special hotline for assistance with the grants.gov Web site and application process. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Eastern Time: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) or 1-800-518-4726.

**Question 11:** Does the project have to be accomplished within the Region 9 and 10 states?

**ANSWER:** Yes. See Section III, C, (1) of the RFP.

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**Question 12:** Can a private company or an organization other than a local or state government entity apply for a Clean School Bus grant?

**ANSWER:** Only if the company partners with one of the eligible entities mentioned in Section III of the RFP and the eligible entity is the grant applicant.

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**Question 13:** Is it OK if a proposal is for multiple school districts in more than one state? Would EPA prefer separate proposals for each state?

**ANSWER:** Multiple districts within Regions 9 and 10 can apply under the same proposal, as long as there is one primary applicant. We actually encourage applicants to team up with other partners, per criteria #3 in Section V (Cost Leveraging). It would then be helpful to provide letters of support or some other form of evidence that the other districts are on board with the project. EPA does not have a stated preference for how proposals are submitted, but we have listed out our selection criteria in Section V. For an example of a previous competition winner that included more than one school district, please refer to the Okemos Proposal located at <http://www.epa.gov/midwestcleandiesel/grants/csbrfp-2007.html>.

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**Question 14:** Where do I find the actual form to submit the grant?

**ANSWER:** Please go to <http://www.grants.gov>. You will find all the forms and the process to apply for the Clean School Bus grant. Also, the last 3 pages of the RFP (Attachment A) have detailed instructions on what to do when she gets to [grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

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**Question 15:** Is this program targeted for larger school districts or could a small system apply for this funding?

**ANSWER:** There are no size restrictions for school districts who would like to apply for funds. We have been encouraging all sizes in every state to apply. For more information, we suggest reading the Request for Proposals and other information located at <http://www.epa.gov/region10/cleanschoolbus.html>. In Section V of the RFP, we specifically list the criteria that we will use to judge the proposals. This information can give you a pretty good idea of what we're looking for.

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**Question 16:** The RFP mentions that the funds can be used for idle reduction technologies and strategies. Can funds be used for a project to reduce idling through outreach programs (driver training, signs, etc.) and policy development? What are some examples of idle reduction technologies and strategies?

**ANSWER:** Projects that include efforts reduce idling through outreach programs are eligible, but please refer to Section V of the Request for Proposals for the criteria that will use to judge all proposals. For examples of idle reduction technologies and projects that have been implemented around the country, please refer to the Clean School Bus USA Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/schoolbus/index.htm>.

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**Question 17:** The RFP states that for replacement projects: “Applicants will be responsible for the remainder of the cost, which does not count toward the required 5 percent matching funds.” When preparing a proposal that is primarily for school bus replacement, what options are there for the activities to support the 5 percent match?

**ANSWER:** There are a variety of activities that can be used to support the 5 percent match in this situation. The RFP encourages projects with multiple categories of activities. These could include, for example: administrative costs, other technologies and fuels, outreach and education, and promoting idle reduction.

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**Question 18:** Is replacing gasoline powered buses with new diesel powered buses eligible under this RFP?

**ANSWER:** Replacing gasoline powered vehicles is eligible. However, replacing gasoline powered buses may rank lower than replacing diesel powered buses depending on the pollutants of interest for the project area. The proposal should discuss the relevance of pollutants that would be reduced.